

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 7, 2005

The Honorable Bill Frist
United States Senate Majority Leader
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate Minority Leader
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders:

As the U.S. Senate begins work on further Hurricane Katrina relief and rebuilding legislation, we write to implore both of you to do everything in your power to ensure it is done in a spirit and through a process that is fully bipartisan.

Now, just nine days after this devastating storm hit, we have already detected some troubling signs in Washington and in the Senate. There are signs that some might try to maneuver in the debate on relief legislation specifically for partisan gain. We view any such attempt as abhorrent and injurious to the already suffering victims of the hurricane.

We implore both of you to lead in a completely different direction. This must be done not only through words and symbols but by developing all relief legislation in a fully bipartisan way.


The Senate has always acted this way in the past in developing disaster relief legislation, whether to address 9/11, Hurricane Andrew, or a myriad of other challenges. The need for this method of action and leadership is even greater now.

There is no question that there were mistakes made and lessons learned from this tragic experience. The Senate will have ample time to thoroughly investigate this event, and we plan to play a major role in these investigations. Now, all of our resources and efforts should be dedicated to the rescuing of victims, providing food, shelter, employment, education and healthcare to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We must also begin laying the groundwork for the long-term recovery and re-building of our great state. Please do not make the citizens of Louisiana a victim once again by allowing our immediate needs to be delayed by partisanship.


In these past situations, committee chairmen and ranking members always developed legislation together and it passed with near unanimity.

Thank you for your leadership and your attention to this vital plea

Sincerely,



Mary Landrieu
United States Senate



David Vitter
United States Senate